



# H1N1 Partner and School Briefing

Date: November 12, 2009  
To: All Rhode Islanders  
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH  
Re: Information on H1N1 and school-based vaccination clinics in Rhode Island

**Local Influenza Activity Level:** Widespread<sup>1</sup>, H1N1 predominant circulating strain

**Rhode Island<sup>2</sup>:** 144 hospitalized cases, 5 deaths

**Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)<sup>3</sup>:** Rhode Island: 9.0%, New England Region: 5.4%, Nation: 7.4%

## Important school-based clinic reminders

- Even with a doctor's note, a child CANNOT be vaccinated in a school that he or she does not attend. Clinic organizers should contact the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH)'s H1N1 Information Line at (401) 222-8022 if they receive a note from a doctor requesting that a child be vaccinated in a school that he or she does not attend.
- Photography and video and audio recordings of any kind are prohibited in clinics when students are being vaccinated. This policy applies to parents, students and members of the media.
- A child with a fever of 100.4°F/38°C or higher cannot be vaccinated in a school-based vaccination clinic.

## School-based H1N1 vaccination clinic best practices

Sound planning and good clinic management have helped all of HEALTH's daytime and evening school-based vaccination clinics run smoothly. Many clinic organizers have advised HEALTH of specific best practices that worked at their sites.

### Daytime Clinics:

- If possible, arrange for a substitute school nurse teacher to handle students' routine health issues.
- If additional H1N1 Vaccination Teams assist at your school, avoid overcrowding the observation area by pacing vaccine administration.
- Ensure that students leave observation areas promptly after their 15 minutes pass and don't loiter.
- Have the day's list of absences at registration tables. This will ensure that only students who are officially present for the day will be vaccinated and will prevent clinic organizers from having to search for absent students who had returned consent forms in advance.
- Set aside one or more staff members without specific assignments. They can troubleshoot.
- Use stickers or stamps to identify students who are registered for their vaccinations.
- Keep school staffers who answer parents' phone calls updated about clinic plans and policies.
- Keep stretchers out of site.
- Be prepared with water for volunteers.

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<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island reported Widespread activity for the week of November 1 to November 7, 2009. Influenza is circulating in 5 regions of the state. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

<sup>2</sup> Influenza-associated hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

<sup>3</sup> Influenza-like illness activity from October 25 to October 31, 2009

#### Evening Clinics:

- **Communicate to parents plans to stagger vaccinations (e.g. “Children with last names beginning with the letters A through G will be vaccinated between 4 and 5:30 p.m.”).**
- Arrange for adequate security in your clinic’s registration area, vaccine administration area and outside of your school. Security outside of your school will help address traffic-flow issues.
- Establish a separate area to vaccinate hysterical or disruptive children.
- Shield children who are awaiting vaccination from children who are receiving their shots.
- Provide an activity for children to keep them calm and occupied during their 15-minute observation periods.
- Use stickers or stamps to identify students who are registered for their vaccinations.
- Have ample school staff to register students. This will ensure an orderly registration process. In addition, familiar faces are comforts to both parents and students.
- Provide clear signage outside and inside of your school that will direct parents to specific areas.
- Be prepared with enrollment rosters at your registration tables.

#### **Requirements for school physical examinations**

According to Rhode Island regulations for school physical examinations, no student should be excluded from school for failure to provide documentation of a completed general physical exam. Sports physical exams are not a state requirement but may be required by individual schools. HEALTH will discuss the possibility of relaxing sports physical requirements with school leaders. For more information on rules and regulations for school physical exams, see [http://www.thriveri.org/documents/Rules\\_Regs\\_School\\_Health.pdf](http://www.thriveri.org/documents/Rules_Regs_School_Health.pdf).

#### **H1N1 vaccination clinics for pregnant and recent post-partum women**

Women & Infants Hospital has scheduled two H1N1 vaccination clinics for pregnant and recent post-partum women on Saturday, November 14. These clinics will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Providence and Woonsocket. **Only pregnant women and post-partum women in the initial eight weeks after delivery will be eligible to receive the vaccine at these clinics.** Patients will be served at the walk-in clinics on a first come, first served basis and will be asked to present their insurance cards at the clinics.

- The Providence clinic will be held directly across the street from Women & Infants' main building, at 100 Dudley Street, level 0, suite 0020. There is free parking in the lot at the back of the building.
- The Woonsocket clinic will be held in Women & Infants' Medical Office Building, 2168 Diamond Hill Road in Woonsocket. There is free parking adjacent to the building.

For more information about the Women & Infants clinics, please call Women & Infants' Health Line at 1-800-921-9299 or see <http://www.womenandinfants.org/body.cfm?id=89&action=detail&ref=323>.

South County Hospital will hold an additional H1N1 vaccination clinic for pregnant women on Saturday, November 14 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at its Potter Conference Center. Pregnant women who would like to be vaccinated at this free clinic must call the RSVP line at 788-1647. They must also complete a registration form, which will be available at the clinic or online at [www.schospital.com](http://www.schospital.com). The first priority for those receiving the vaccine will be patients of the South County Hospital Center for Women’s Health – Obstetrics & Gynecology. The hospital expects to have enough vaccine available for additional pregnant women.

#### **Women & Infants Hospital NICU visitation policy**

In order to control the spread of infection and safeguard patients and families during flu season, Women & Infants Hospital has changed its visitation policy for patients in its Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). For families of NICU patients, only the mother and her significant other will be allowed to visit patients in the NICU. No other visitors will be allowed, and no children visits, including siblings of the baby, will be allowed. Kids Klub, the hospital’s support program for the siblings of children in the NICU, will be discontinued until further notice. Women & Infants understands that this may be difficult for families and appreciates the cooperation of families in adhering to this policy change.

### **Posters promoting vaccination for pregnant women available on HEALTH's website**

"No Flu On Board," a poster developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) promoting H1N1 flu vaccination for pregnant women, is available to download and print on HEALTH's website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/materialbyothers/NoFluOnBoard.pdf>. Other free educational resources on seasonal and H1N1 flu are available on CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/freeresources.htm>. Materials in other languages are available on HEALTH's website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/languages/>.

### **The role of animals in the spread of H1N1**

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management does not recommend that domestic pet animals be tested for H1N1. Cases of H1N1 in domestic pet animals are extremely rare. Pet animals do not appear to pose a significant risk of transmitting H1N1 to their owners, and the risk of animals becoming infected with H1N1 is very rare. The usual precautions of frequent hand washing and coughing into your elbow will minimize the risk of transmitting H1N1 to pets and to other people. The Department of Environmental Management is continually monitoring the situation and will revise its recommendations as appropriate.

### **Resources**

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>;
- Archived partner briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address [h1n1@health.ri.gov](mailto:h1n1@health.ri.gov)
- <http://www.flu.gov>